



Leadership team: Partner, CEO H. Lawrence Webb; Senior Vice President Joan Marcus-Colvin; Senior Vice President Mark Kawanami; Fabienne Smolinski, vice president, human resources

Builder Earns Employee Loyalty Through Relationships

New Home Co. Starts With Foundation of Camaraderie

By KIM HAMAN

Joan Marcus-Colvin's life irrevocably changed on June 17, 2014, when her husband of 27 years, John, was struck by a car and killed while riding his bicycle near their Laguna Beach home while training for an Ironman Triathlon.

Marcus-Colvin, senior vice president of sales, marketing and design for the New Home Co., recalls that her good friend and

boss, Larry Webb, chief executive of the company, rushed to be with her and her two daughters.

"Whatever you need, you've got it," she remembers him saying.

Her co-workers were there, too, bringing her meals, running errands, and providing listening ears.

"My work family came to my side," she says. "It wasn't just that week. It was weeks and months, and even today. Grief comes in waves and milestones. I cannot explain how their support really saved me."

That kind of friendship and caring among co-workers isn't found everywhere, she said reflectively, adding that those kinds of relationships are the foundation on which the New Home Co. is built.

Culture of Caring

The homebuilder is the 2015 winner of the Business Journal's best places to work in the midsize-company category.

It ranked No. 21 on February's Business Journal list of the 30 biggest homebuilders based in Orange County. The company had 42 sales in Orange County last year.

It was founded in 2009 by Webb, Wayne Stelmar, Tom Redwitz, and Joseph Davis, all longtime veterans of the Southern California building industry.

It started near the official end of the Great Recession, though the dark days were just beginning at that point. Still, it quickly found its footing. Its main stated goal was to build homes of the highest quality and craftsmanship, homes that people would love to live in, whether they were starting out, raising families, or looking forward to retirement.

Webb said he knew that in order to be successful, he and his partners needed to build a strong internal team.

"At the core, you need to have smart, passionate people who believe strongly that building homes for people to raise their families in is a good thing to do with your life," he says.

Webb and his partners recruited the "best, most talented, knowledgeable, and passionate people in the building industry." Among them were Marcus-Colvin and Mark Kawanami, now senior vice president.

"We essentially worked for free at first," Kawanami says, "because we truly believed in Larry's vision."

By January 2014, the company was ready to launch its initial public offering. Now, six years after the doors opened in a tiny office Webb was able to secure rent-free, the company is poised to deliver 1,000 new homes and estimates revenues of just under \$1 billion, according to Webb.

It's now headquartered in Aliso Viejo and has offices in Walnut Creek and Roseville in Northern California.

The company's slogan is "Build a Better Life." For the people who spend their days creating New Home Co. communities, those words mean that they hold themselves to the highest possible standards, both in their careers and in personal lives, according to a company brochure.

The company has grown rapidly, particularly in the year and a half since it went public. The organization tripled during that time from 80 employees to 240.

Webb says that as with any company that grows fast, people were tested at times. He says the senior leadership team—which in-

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